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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 003032

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: RUSSIA ACCUSES GEORGIA OF MILITARY PREPARATIONS

REF: A. MOSCOW 2918

[1](#)B. 12/14/09 BEYRLE-BASS E-MAILS

Classified By: Ambassador John Beyrle for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. DFM Karasin expressed to Ambassador Beyrle concern over Georgian "military preparations" near Bazaleti, southeast of Akhalkgori. Ambassador Beyrle responded that the U.S. did not see any reason for concern, as these were routine redeployments, which were observed and verified by the EU Monitoring Mission. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On December 14, DFM Grigoriy Karasin called Ambassador Beyrle to express concern over Georgian "military preparations" near Akhalkgori. Karasin claimed Georgia was using the winter period to build up its military forces, alleging that the Georgians had moved motorized strike battalions and artillery units near Bazaleti, southeast of Akhalkgori on undisputed Georgian territory. He accused Georgia of preventing the EU monitoring mission (EUMM) from observing the area of the buildup.

[1](#)3. (C) On November 26 (ref A), Karasin had earlier voiced similar concerns about "provocative Georgian actions," without giving specifics. He called upon the U.S. to "use its influence" with the Georgians to get them to "cool it." The Russian military, he warned, was getting nervous about this activity.

[1](#)4. (C) After conferring with Embassy Tbilisi (ref B), on December 16, Ambassador Beyrle passed the following points in a non-paper to Karasin:

-- We have looked into the subject you raised in your call to me on December 14, 2009, and do not see any reason for concern.

-- These are fairly routine redeployments that do not amount to any net increase in forces.

-- All the movements were reported to, and observed and verified by, the EUMM.

-- We would welcome more transparency on Russian military plans, given the work underway on permanent bases and operating locations close to the administrative boundary line.

[1](#)5. (C) In a brief exchange at a reception December 16, Karasin expressed appreciation for these points, confirming he had passed them to the military and saying they were "just what I needed."

[1](#)6. (C) Our quad (UK, France, Germany) counterparts told us that they have not received similar communications from the GOR. Karasin probably raised the Russian allegations with EU

Special Representative Pierre Morel in a December 16 meeting under the rubric of "issues of security at the Georgian-South Ossetian border", but we have not yet gotten a readout of that discussion.

¶7. (SBU) On December 15, Vedomosti cited unnamed diplomatic and military sources in the Russian government charging Georgia with planning to retake the Akhalkalaki region of South Ossetia, whose population is predominantly Georgian. The MOD source said that Georgia was "intensively" rotating its troops in the region, while Western instructors were training Georgian forces in mountain warfare techniques useful for that area.

¶8. (C) Comment: Russia, by constantly raising Georgian military activities as an international issue, is in essence advancing the view that the GOG has forfeited its right to take such decisions independently. Periodic chest thumping may also serve to remind those in the breakaway regions that Moscow remains committed to their defense.
Beyrle